



Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq

Author: Wahidul Alam

Translator: Mihsan Bin Maksud



Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq

Abul Kashem Fazlul Huq, a legendary leader throughout the land of Bengal. He was a distinguished politician, writer, organizer, Bengali lawyer, and a member of parliament. Among the leaders who have deeply considered the welfare of Bengal and the Bengali people, Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq's name must be placed at the forefront. It is



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said that as a boy, A.K. Fazlul Huq would tear up a book after reading it, or swim across a crocodile-infested, swift river. Some of these stories are true, while others have been lovingly crafted by the people, mixing reality with their imagination.

A.K. Fazlul Huq was born on October 26, 1873, in the village of Satura Mia Bari, located in Saturia Union, Rajapur Upazila of Jhalokathi district in the Barisal Division. His ancestral home was in the village of Chakhar, in Banaripara Upazila of Barisal district. He was the only son of Kazi Muhammad Wazed and Saidunnessa Khatun. His father,

Wazed Ali Sahib, was one of the renowned lawyers of Barisal. Despite being the only child of a wealthy father, Fazlul Huq possessed many virtues from a young age. He was raised with a strong sense of discipline and values, instilled with a deep attachment to principles and ideals.

From a young age, Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq exhibited signs of brilliance, sharp intellect, and remarkable talent. His education in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu began at home. At the age of 14, he passed the entrance exam from Barisal District School, securing a first-class scholarship along with prizes, achieving first place in the Dhaka Division. He then pursued his studies at Kolkata's Presidency College, where he successfully completed his F.A. (Intermediate) with distinction. Later, he earned his B.A. with honors in Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics. In 1895, he obtained his M.A. in Mathematics. After briefly teaching at Ramchandra College in Barisal, he passed the B.L. (Bachelor of Law) exam in 1897.



The house of Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq

After passing the B.L. (Bachelor of Law) from Ripon College, Kolkata, in 1897, A.K. Fazlul Huq began his apprenticeship under Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee at the Kolkata High Court. In 1900, he started his legal practice, and in 1901, he returned to Barisal, where he joined the Barisal Court. He also worked as a mathematics professor at Barisal's Rajchandra College. In 1906, he left his legal practice to take up a government job, joining as a Deputy Magistrate. In 1911, he resigned from government service and rejoined the Kolkata High Court, where he was honored with a civic reception in Kolkata.

Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq's political life was long, significant, and diverse. He tirelessly fought for the rights of the people of Bengal and was recognized as a popular leader among both the Muslim and Hindu communities.



Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq with Mohammad Ali Jinnah

During the British era, the bold Huq Sahib resigned from his government job in 1911 due to disagreements with the authorities and resumed his legal practice. In 1906, he participated in the All-India Muslim Educational Conference held in Dhaka. From 1913 to 1920, he served as a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, and from 1920 to 1935, he was a member of the Montagu-Chelmsford Council. In 1916, at the joint session of the League and Congress in Lucknow, the proposal he presented became known as the famous 'Lucknow Pact.' In 1918, Fazlul Huq presided over the Delhi session of the All-India Muslim League. His speech as president at that session remains a golden chapter in history. In 1925, he was appointed as a member of Bengal's cabinet. In 1927, he founded a political party called the Krishak Praja Party. He attended the Round Table Conferences held in Britain in 1930-31 and 1931-32, where his powerful speeches left a lasting impact. In 1935-36, he was elected mayor of the Kolkata Corporation, becoming the first Bengali Muslim to hold that position. In 1937, Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq was elected as the first Prime Minister of undivided Bengal. In 1940, during the All-India Muslim League's session in Lahore, presided over by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Fazlul Huq delivered a fiery speech in which he presented the first proposal for Pakistan. Impressed by his speech, the people of Punjab gave him the title 'Sher-e-Bangla,' meaning the 'Tiger of Bengal.' From then on, he became known by this title.



Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq during a speech

During his long tenure as Prime Minister from 1937 to 1943, Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq undertook numerous welfare initiatives. During this period, he established the 'Debt Arbitration Board,' which helped poor farmers escape the clutches of moneylenders who charged exorbitant interest.

Even after the establishment of Pakistan, Fazlul Huq remained active in politics. He served as the Prime Minister of East Bengal and later held the position of Pakistan's Home Minister. However, his thoughts and policies often clashed with those of the central government, leading to frequent conflicts.

After the establishment of Pakistan, in 1952, Fazlul Huq was appointed as the Advocate General of former East Pakistan. During the 1952 Language Movement, the Krishak Sramik Party took a strong stance in favor of language rights and supported the movement to preserve

the dignity of the Bengali language. In 1953, during the provincial elections, a conference of Krishak Praja Party workers was held at his residence. In this conference, the word "Praja" was dropped from the party's name, and the "Krishak Sramik Party" was formed. The Krishak Sramik Party played a crucial role in advocating for the autonomy of East Pakistan. They actively opposed the discriminatory policies of the central government and fought against the unequal treatment of East Pakistan, helping to unite the people of the region. In the 1954 general elections, under his leadership, the United Front achieved a landslide victory, and Fazlul Huq became the Prime Minister of East Pakistan. After a shift in the political landscape, he was appointed as Pakistan's Central Home Minister. From 1956 to 1958, he served as the Governor of East Pakistan.



Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq with Sheikh Mujib

A.K. Fazlul Huq held multiple significant positions, including the Chief Minister of undivided Bengal in 1937, Central Home Minister of Pakistan, Prime Minister of East Pakistan, and Governor of East Pakistan from 1956 to 1958.

Through the establishment of the Krishak Praja Party, he played a crucial role in safeguarding the rights of farmers and laborers in Bengal. He enacted laws to abolish the zamindari system and took steps to waive farmers' debts. Under his leadership, various social and economic reforms were implemented. Additionally, by presenting the Lahore Resolution in 1940, he played an essential role in advocating for the autonomy of East Bengal. His thoughts and actions during the pre-and post-independence struggle for Bangladesh stirred the consciousness of Bengali nationalism and the desire for independence, laying the groundwork for the eventual Liberation War.



Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq with Sheikh Mujib and Dhirendranath Datta

A.K. Fazlul Huq was not only a politician but also made significant contributions to literature and culture. He had a deep interest in the development of Bengali literature, culture, and education, and he undertook various initiatives and activities in these areas. Fazlul Huq emphasized the promotion and expansion of the Bengali language and was dedicated to preserving the cultural heritage of Bengal.



Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq with Rabindranath Tagore

A.K. Fazlul Huq co-edited a magazine called "Balak" for young readers and later published another weekly magazine named "Bharat Suhrid." He also authored a book titled "Bengal Today." Additionally, he assisted in the publication of the magazine "Nabayug," edited by Kazi Nazrul Islam. The magazine drew the attention of the British government due to Nazrul's rebellious writings. In response, an English judge of the Calcutta High Court, Justice Tyron, summoned Fazlul Huq to his chamber and warned him about writing against the British government. However, Fazlul Huq, undeterred by the threat, encouraged Nazrul Islam to continue his fiery writings. Although the British government shut down "Nabayug," it was revived due to Huq's efforts.

He played a pioneering role in promoting education for Muslims, and his efforts led to the establishment of numerous educational institutions across the country, including Dhaka University, Islamia College in Kolkata, Lady Brabourne College, and Fazlul Huq College in Chakar.

Through the Kisan Praja movement, the Bengal Tenancy Act, and the introduction of the Debt Conciliation Board, he made significant contributions to the development of the agricultural community in Bengal. His personal donations enabled many underprivileged girls, candidates, and the establishment of welfare homes. Due to Fazlul Huq's virtuous qualities and generosity, his contributions will always be remembered.



Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Huq during his elderly days

On April 27, 1962, Friday morning, A.K. Fazlul Huq passed away at the age of 88. His body was kept at his residence on Das Lane in Tikatory, Dhaka, until 10:30 AM on April 28. On the same day, his funeral prayer was held at Paltan Maidan in Dhaka at 10:30 AM. He was later buried in the area of Dhaka University, where the graves of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Khawaja Nazimuddin are also located. The burial site of these three leaders is historically known as "Three Leaders' Mazar." In mourning

for his death, Radio Pakistan suspended all programs and recited the Quran throughout the day. The national flag was flown at half-mast, and all educational institutions, schools, and colleges across Pakistan were declared closed on April 30.

In 1955, Dhaka University awarded A.K. Fazlul Huq an honorary Doctor of Law degree. In 1959, the then President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan, honored him with the title 'Hilal-e-Pakistan.' Additionally, a residential hall at Dhaka University is named after him, and the name of Jinnah Hall at Rajshahi University has been changed to honor him. There is a student residential hall named Fazlul Huq Hall at KUET, and the Sher-e-Bangla Hall at BUET is also named in his honor. Bangladesh Agricultural University and Barisal University each have a hall named after him, and there is a student residential hall named after him at Patuakhali Science and Technology University. Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University in Dhaka, established in 1938, was the first agricultural education institution in the then Pak-India subcontinent and also has a hall named after him. A locality in Dhaka, known as Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, is named in his honor, where the National Assembly of Bangladesh is located. Furthermore, the Sher-e-Bangla Cricket Stadium in Dhaka is recognized as the home of cricket in Bangladesh, and Sher-e-Bangla Medical College in Barisal is named after him, which is a significant medical education institution in southern Bangladesh.

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